

# YANAIAN REVIEW

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# ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

# 90 YEARS



## Editorial

April 24th 2005 is not to be like the previous commemorations of the Armenian Genocide. It stands out with its legacy of 90 years, a legacy which constituted a heavy burden, an unsettled debt and -at the same time- a strive for recognition and a struggle for justice.

The Genocide carried out by the Young Turks was "their perception" of handling the Armenian Question, which troubled the peace of mind of the Ottoman Empire, confronted to the endless Armenian demands for reforms, demands which were, in turn, backed by the major European powers. The implementation of this Genocide would strengthen nascent Turkey's aspirations to found a Greater Turkey with the merge of all Turkic speaking people of the region.

However, disregarding Turkey's bet, the event of the Genocide would quickly become a turning point in the History of Armenians, leading to the outbreak of the Armenian Cause, a movement overcoming the boundaries of space and time.

This year, the Armenian Cause faces acute challenges of political nature. Indeed, the repercussions of the "Greater Middle East" on its immediate peripheral regions – namely the South Caucasus – reinforce the possibilities of reviving the competition among international powers to gain or restore influence within the region.

Second, the opening of the controversial and most awaited oil pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (going from Azerbaijan, through Georgia and ending in Turkey), expected this year, is an impetus to reach peace in the region through the settlement – one way or another – of unresolved conflicts (such as Nagorno Karabagh). Therefore, the urgent need to ensure international powers' interests (provision with oil from the Caspian Sea) poses a threat for States still recovering from the difficult transition to democracy and stability.

Third, the upcoming start of negotiations between Turkey and the European Union (scheduled on October 3rd) should not lead to believe in their immediate success. The recognition of the Armenian Genocide should and will remain a precondition prior to Turkey's membership in the European Club whether that occurs next year or in twenty years.

Last but not least, the ongoing Turkish strategy based on the distortion of irrefutable facts and the defamation of the genocidal act's gravity, has conquered more than one arena: foreign policy, domestic politics, national education, culture and heritage, academic research, etc. Consequently, the adequate Armenian reply should be as multidimensional and as uncompromising as the other party.

And so, the 90th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide has a unique political context which should lead to the just resolution of the Armenian Cause as a whole, through the recognition of the Genocide by Turkey, the restoration of the occupied lands to the Republic of Armenia and the compensation for the losses of the Armenian Nation. Only this way, can we serve and secure the future of Armenians and Armenia.

"The future is not written because only the people can write it" said a prominent European leader.

90 years after the Armenian Genocide, 90 years after what was thought to be "the end of it", Armenians still write their History.

Today, the Republic of Armenia stands.  
So shall Free, Independent and United Armenia.

**A.R.F. Zavarian Student Association**

# THE PERVERSE PLEASURES OF GENOCIDE DENIAL: AN ETHICAL AND HISTORICAL RECKONING

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*In this essay, I will discuss two issues regarding non-Turkish deniers of the Turkish Genocide of Armenians. First, I will consider why they involve themselves in denial. Second, I will examine briefly an aspect of the techniques deniers use to convince people that the Armenian Genocide either did not happen or remains uncertain.*

*My goal in this paper is not to offer independent analyses of particular deniers, nor to go into detail examining the roughly 20 specific types of denial arguments various scholars have laid out (see, for instance, Aghjayan 1998, Hovannisian 1999, and Theriault 2004). Rather, I will identify what I hold to be one of the root forces driving denial by non-Turkish professionals, a force that is not typically identified. I will focus on US academic deniers, because so many of the most prominent academic deniers are in the United States. Then, I will briefly summarize key points of critique of denialist methods that I have offered in certain lectures, conference papers, and publications (for instance, Theriault 2001, 2003, and 2004).*

## PART I: THE REWARDS OF DENIAL

The motivations of deniers in themselves are not of real concern. As Ervin Staub points out, in any context there will always be some individuals who would lead a genocide, but what is necessary for them actually to execute a genocide is followers, as well as bystanders who do not intervene to stop the genocide. To understand why a genocide happened, we must look at these followers and bystanders. (Staub 1989) This seems true of denial as well. There are always those who will engage in this activity; the question is, under what circumstances and why do they have appeal?

This suggests that the motivation of the main deniers in itself is not important. If, however, we want to understand how to separate leading deniers from their actual and potential followers "typically otherwise well intentioned people who have no particular prejudice against Armenians but who get sucked into the logic of denial" exposure of deniers for what they are can be very important. As Israel Charny's work on denial (for example, Charny 1991 and 1992) shows, the psychological forces producing denial are the attitudinal analogues of the concrete functioning of denial. In simpler terms, the desire of deniers, for instance, to celebrate the destruction of the victim group produces denial that in fact functions to celebrate the destruction of the victim group. This means that an otherwise well-intentioned person who follows a major denier in taking a denialist stance is in fact celebrating the destruction of Armenians. Pointing this out can be a way of convincing someone who carelessly joins a denialist chorus to rethink his/her complicity. It can also raise the stakes for someone who is a potential careless supporter of denial, pushing him/her to assess the historical details before countenancing a position that, if it is wrong, will mean demeaning victims of a great crime against humanity by celebrating their suffering.

Often, responses to deniers aim to show that their claims do not square with the historical facts. This is fine to an extent, but assumes that the appeal of denial is purely factual and that the deniers' converts are simply rational empirical evaluators. To the extent that deniers manipulate the very standards by which their targets evaluate data, however, these targets do

not function as rational empirical evaluators. I will revisit this issue Part II. Suffice it here to point out that, in such cases, countering denial requires exposing the manipulations of the deniers. In this regard, analysis of the motives of deniers and the complex social forces causing them to act as they do is useful.

The deniers I am concerned with here are those who are not from the perpetrator community. The most dangerous deniers are those who are from outside, and so can take on the mantle of disinterest. What is more, the form of denial from such "outsiders" is quite often in itself much more convincing. Instead of the clearly prejudicial statements of many Turkish scholars, government officials, and others, we have from non-Turkish sources denial arguments that at least pretend to a scientific basis.

One prevalent view of why such deniers do what they do is careerism (see, for instance, Charny and Fromer 1998). That is, the denier benefits in terms of money and status by engaging in denial. This seems borne out by the fact that most academic deniers of the Armenian Genocide, Holocaust, and other well-established genocides are mediocre scholars at best. Heath Lowry, for instance, has produced no significant scholarship, and were it not for his pro-Turkish denialist activities, would probably not have had a teaching job at all, let alone a tenured position at an elite university. Even Bernard Lewis, whose general work on the Ottoman Empire is recognized as impressive despite his denial of the Armenian Genocide, seems to operate through a career interest, for instance, the trading of denial for access to the Ottoman Archives. One wonders, though, just how good his work on the Ottoman Empire is given his sidestepping of a key event in it with important causal factors in the history of that empire and what a truly open Ottoman Archive would have allowed other scholars to do in surpassing Lewis' own work.

But, is careerism really an explanation? Does the reduction of denial to a transparent self-interest model simply shift the question of ultimate human motivations one step down? We could ask, why the desire for status? The answer to such a



question would carry us far beyond the issue of denial, but some of the acts and attitudes of some deniers seem more intense than this theory accounts for. While careerism accounts for some deniers' activities, untangling the psychological causal chains is difficult. Most anyone who has been in academia - and I am focusing here on academic deniers - will attest to the careerism of so many scholars, but only a relative few engage in such blatantly immoral activity as genocide denial. What is more, careerism might explain why certain scholars become major deniers or continue denying for a long time, but such individuals usually have long histories of denial that often stem from humble origins. Why did they start denying? Could it be that the career benefits reinforced a distinct original impetus? Could it be that careerism must be intertwined with other psychological forces to motivate adequately the activities of major deniers? This is clear when we recognize the price of denial, which for figures such as Norman Itzkowitz has meant public condemnation by a large number of prestigious scholars and other important figures, without a balancing career advancement. Indeed, why would scholars such as Lewis, with a tremendous international reputation and a chair at one of the most important universities in the world, bother after a time with denial if it were only to advance their careers?

As a useful aside, for US State Department personnel, one might see careerism operating in a stricter way. To make it in the State Department, one must "toe the line." In the case of the Armenian Genocide, this means complicity in denials by the Turkish government. But, this begs the question of why individuals who later are complicit in denial choose the domination across the globe, the work of the State Department might have an appeal in some cases to those with State Department for a career in the first place. Indeed, given the poor human rights record of the United States, including aggressive wars and other forms of military and political a predisposition toward the view that genocide is an acceptable form of state policy if it is in line with US interests. To get a sense of the extension of this attitude beyond Armenian and Turkish issues, one need only look at the support the United States gave the Indonesian government during its 1965 genocide of "communists" and the East Timor Genocide it began in 1975.

In this way, the importance of realpolitical agendas and that of ideological commitments emerge as factors in genocide denial. Clearly there are those who deny the Armenian Genocide because it is useful to do so, while others become so blinded by their ideologically-driven conception of the "US National Interest" that denial of genocide becomes acceptable. There are those in the US academy, think tanks, and elsewhere who deny the Armenian Genocide for these reasons. Further, this might apply in the case of Bernard Lewis, insofar as an ideologically-determined perspective on the Middle East causes him to see Turkey in a positive light and that which Turkey considers an enemy - that which the Turkish government sees as attacking Turkey, namely the Armenians - as an enemy.

The Turkish connections of many major deniers, especially figures such as Stanford Shaw and Norman Itzkowitz, who has gone so far as to state that he feels like an honorary Turk, suggests perhaps a yet closer tie with Turkish nationalist ideology, over and above US attitudes. This also goes beyond an affinity for Turkey and particular Turkish people, though this can be a factor as well. Friendship or a more general affinity can be as strong a bond as careerism.

But, this approach threatens to represent denial into a mere favor for friends. Here the work of Israel Charny is crucial. For him, there is pleasure in denial (Charny 1992). As we begin to

consider this aspect of denial, it is helpful to reflect on what we mean by "denial." Denial is not just a cover-up of facts, and thus is not simply "negation." What it entails is a denial of confirmation to those asserting those facts, Armenian and non-Armenian alike. Such a denial in general - the denial of the desires of others - is one important form of power, and is motivated on this level by a perverse negative pleasure in preventing others from getting what they desire. This might be psychoanalyzed, but the prevalence of this phenomenon in bureaucratic contexts, for instance, allows us to treat it as a primary force in human behavior without need of explanation. At least some human beings enjoy denying others what they want or deserve. To focus on denial, some human beings enjoy denying others fair treatment or justice. We often think that racist prejudice produces discriminatory treatment, but it might be that the desire to discriminate drives the intensity of the racism itself.

What I am suggesting, then, is that deniers engage in denial at least in part because they enjoy humiliating and inflicting injustice on Armenians. The desire to cover up the crime allows denial of the needs, wants, and fairness to the victims. The pleasure, then, is a very determinate kind: it derives precisely from features of denial itself. This applies to Turkish deniers as well. Even those without a pre-disposition toward anti-Armenian prejudice embrace denial (presumably unconsciously) as what they experience as a legitimate means of inflicting this harm on others. Moreover, whether deniers believe in their false claims or not becomes irrelevant. Belief in denial becomes just a rationalization for discharging their anti-Armenian-ism. They thus avoid any moral tension over their denial: they feel justified in the pain they cause Armenians, and in fact believe this pain to be the Armenians' fault for claiming a genocide occurred.

The affinity for things Turkish is a part of this - the sense of legitimacy depends in part on reinforcement from others, particularly where victims challenge the legitimacy. The "in-group" of Turkish and non-Turkish but pro-Turkish individuals reinforce each other in their sense that they have a right to do what they are deriving pleasure from. This has important implications for those inside and outside the Armenian community who conceive of denial as something merely instrumental. They assume that when the goal of denial is removed - when, say, denial loses its credibility academically or Armenians give up claims to reparations for the Armenian Genocide - denial will end. This is an assumption, for example, of some who see the recent Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission as a means of ending denial of the Armenian Genocide. But, denial works also at a deeper level. Through denial, Armenians are marked as fit targets for harm, in a manner similar to the Armenian Genocide itself. Denial enacts a similar core anti Armenian-ism as that which drove the genocide itself, a contempt for and antagonism toward Armenians that the relative success of the Armenian Genocide embedded in Turkish political, social, and cultural structures. In fact, even if denial were ended, this does not entail - as so many believe - that Turkish anti Armenian-ism will also end. Unless this underlying cause of denial is engaged directly, it cannot be extirpated. To pluck the dandelion flower of denial does not mean pulling out the roots of Turkish anti Armenian-ism.

Non-Turkish major deniers embrace this pleasure-producing contempt and antagonism. As long as this attitude is there, so will denial be. Denial is a product of this attitude, a means of discharging it.

In the Turkish denial case, this attitude is often reflected in what might be called an "imperial mentality." The pleasure

of denial is a pleasure of superiority, of control. Thus, denial derives from or legitimates a sense of deep superiority. For those within Turkish political and cultural life, the specific form is imperial, as denial becomes a way of re-enacting the old system of imperial domination that subjugated Armenians before the genocide. Almost ironically, the destruction of the Armenians of Turkey has not spared their progeny from the ravages of imperial Ottoman Turkish rule. While most Armenians are now removed from the direct authority of the Turkish government and its international power is spotty at best, denial becomes an indirect means of exercising a measure of imperial domination. As I have said, denial prevents Armenians from getting what they deserve and/or need. Thus, central Armenian rights and needs continue to be mediated through the Turkish state and its functionaries, often working in bureaucratic structures in which denial becomes not just a matter of state policy by a routinized activity. If denial is motivated by a practical and realpolitical desire to forestall reparations in the form of territory, returned property, etc., this refusal to return the fruits of the genocide must be understood from within the attempted imperial dominance relation of denial.

Non-Turkish deniers participate in this subjugation and share in the sense of power it produces. One can see this reflected in, for instance, Norman Itzkowitz' gleeful mocking of the grandson of an Armenian Genocide survivor, especially when this is evaluated with his unabashedly laudatory recounting of the glories of Ottoman imperial conquest and domination. Those who have witnessed major deniers in public action are likely to be able to recall other comments, attitudes, and so forth that evidence this pleasurable domination.



It follows that resistance to denial by Armenians and others is the struggle against this attempt at domination, which at its extreme becomes a forced mediation of Armenian identity - Armenians' self-understanding by reference to their history and current situation - through the Turkish state and individual non-Turkish deniers themselves.

If it is true that denial is in this sense tied up with the failure of democracy in Turkey, it is not in the simple manner of blocking a truthful appraisal of Turkish history that would force a recognition of the dangers and moral unacceptability of its militarism, as is believed by some. Denial derives from an anti-democratic foundation. An end to denial will not necessarily mean the end of this antidemocrat-ism.

## PART II: THE WARPING LOGIC OF DENIAL

In this part of the paper, I examine certain methods deniers use to advance their cause. My purpose is to expose the subtle manipulations that the success of denial depends on, to provide those fighting against it tools for engaging otherwise well intentioned individuals who are susceptible to these manipulations. intentioned individuals who are susceptible to these manipulations. Simple awareness of these manipulations and their fallacious natures is the best defense against their use by deniers.

Given my analysis of the passion that in part drives non-Turkish deniers, it is tempting to dismiss their endeavor as irrational. But, if pleasure is at the heart of their denial activities, it functions in a "rational economy," to follow Foucault (see Foucault 1978). The desire for the pleasure of domination might be an irreducible starting point without a rational foundation, but its pursuit through denial follows a rational course. In other words, whatever the nature of the desire for domination itself, deniers pursue it in calculating manner. Indeed, the relative success of academic deniers in the United States depends to a large extent on the scientific form they give their arguments and "evidence." The apparent formal legitimacy of their work makes it convincing without appeal to the content of their claims. Denialists' work mimics good scholarship - looks like legitimate scholarship - and so for educated people it is.

Deniers attack the veracity of the Armenian Genocide in two manners. First, they falsify the historical record in various ways, from demographic manipulations to rejecting large sets of documentary evidence, including eyewitness reports of the atrocities comprising the genocide. This aspect of denial is, of course, its central foundation. But, on my view, these falsifications have the success they do because deniers are able to manipulate the evaluative standards used by their target audience to decide what is true.

To this end, deniers employ certain tactics. Most notable among them is the fostering of historical relativism. On some occasions, as in the case of Itzkowitz (Theriault 2001), deniers argue directly for the position that all perspectives on an historical event are equally valid. Just as often, they try to "sneak" this assumption in: they write as if it is a given. Their "expert" status causes non-experts to accept this assumption without much in the way of direct reflection on it. In either case, once the target audience accepts thisrelativism, factual refutation of denial arguments becomes ineffectual: even presentation of what should be compelling documentary evidence is reduced to just another instance of the "Armenian" view of history - even when the sources or the presenter is not Armenian, as is so often the case. There is no "objective" reference point from which to evaluate evidence and argumentation. Even critical analyses of denial such as this paragraph are reduced to mere "positions" within a range of equally valid statements pro and con.

Historical relativism makes evaluative judgments about historical events impossible. It fails to recognize two aspects of the "perspectives" on history it renders equally valid. First, it does not consider the motivations and agendas of those perspectives. If a perspective is motivated by the intentional desire to falsify the historical record, then this motivation supplies a criterion for rejecting this perspective: the denier recognizes, at least internally, the truth and that he/she is falsifying the facts. The denialist falsehoods are not just as valid as the true assertions of the Armenian Genocide, even by such a denier's own reckoning. Second, historical relativism incorrectly maintains that the true and false "perspectives" are somehow discrete and independent of one another. But these

"perspectives" are produced out of an unequal relationship between (some) Turks and Armenians. These two viewpoints are part of a single system: denialism functions to oppress Armenians as part of a larger pattern of violent domination and destruction by the Turkish state and segments of its civil society. Regardless of whether the denier really believes his/her false viewpoint, the denialist view can easily be recognized as part of this system of domination and destruction. An alternative to historical relativism is the conflation of neutrality and objectivity. A denier might not call into question the possibility of an objective view of historical facts, but will misrepresent what "objectivity" is. He/she will claim or assume it to be neutrality, that is, a middle point between claims that the Armenian Genocide happened and claims that it did not. The net result at the least calls the genocide into question, which is in effect a victory for deniers because it prevents a basis for legal and political action related to the genocide, while it might go so far as to establish a compromise denialist position as the truth. The problem is that, where the historical truth is captured in one of two contending positions, objectivity means choosing that position over the other. To adopt a compromise neutrality is to embrace a false view, and so neutrality is just as likely the path to falsehood as to truth. (See Theriault 2003.)

We can add a third technique, that of treating history as a flow of events that more or less just happen, without clear causal relationships and structured events. In this way, the Armenian Genocide - an event centrally-planned by a specific group of people and carried out in a systematic way - becomes merely a host of unfortunate deaths. If a cause is discussed at all, it is the vague notion of "wartime conditions" or the abstract historical "end of (the Ottoman) Empire." The problem with this is twofold again. First, it transforms history into a series of uncaused events, making explanations of why things happened impossible. But, things occur as the result of causes, though the causal relationships might be very complex. The study of history is in part an attempt to disentangle these complicated structures of causation. This denialist approach renders all historical research meaningless. Second, however complex historical causation is, in at least some cases, historical agents - individuals, particularly those who gain power, as well as groups of people - act intentionally to bring about certain results. A key feature of genocide is precisely that an often small group of people is able to bend other people and "the flow of history" to its nefarious ends. From the denialist perspective we are considering, historical agency - real people doing actual things - is erased. Even where individuals and groups are generally acknowledged to have intentionally pursued a destructive goal, such as the Nazis and the Holocaust, this perspective removes them from moral culpability.

Finally, deniers challenge the extensive evidence of the Armenian Genocide by manipulating the evidentiary standards their targets use to evaluate the wealth of compelling historical data. One way is to question the reliability of particular pieces of evidence. For instance, Heath Lowry has called into question the veracity of Ambassador Morgenthau's account of the genocide. Their trick is to focus attention so much on a particular piece of evidence that their target audience comes to think that the reality of the Armenian Genocide turns on just that piece of evidence. If that evidence is a bit ambiguous, then this ambiguity is transferred to the genocide itself. But this means discounting the immense array of other pieces of evidence, which, when examined as a whole, leave no doubt that the Armenian Genocide occurred. If that one piece of evidence is solid, then by treating it in isolation from the thousands of corroborating documents, a denier is able to make its unreliability seem plausible and then use it in the just described manner to call the genocide into question.

Determining historical truth depends on weighing all the available historical data and deciding which interpretation best fits the data. The better the fit of a certain understanding to the data, the more certain we can be of that explanation. In the case we are examining, the typical understanding of the Armenian Genocide fits the data exceptionally well, and so we can view it as a historical fact with a high degree of certainty.

This suggests a variation of this approach, the misrepresentation of logical doubt as reasonable doubt. By its very nature, any historical fact that one believes to be true could in fact be false. We believe that the earth is round, not flat, but it is possible that humankind has fallen victim to some vast conspiracy to fool us into this position, or that the scientific evidence is ambiguous in such a way that we have been led to a false conclusion. But this possibility is merely logical, not reasonable. The evidence overwhelmingly supports the view that the earth is round. Not only is one justified in holding that view, in the face of the evidence it would be intellectually dishonest or irresponsible to avoid holding that view. Similarly with the Armenian Genocide: the weight of the evidence is clearly on the side of the veracity of this event, and it would be unreasonable to question the event in the face of that evidence. (See Theriault 2003.)

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# Interview with David Barsamian

Journalist, author, and lecturer David Barsamian is the founder and director of Alternative Radio, based in Boulder, Colorado ([www.alternativeradio.org](http://www.alternativeradio.org)). His interviews and articles appear regularly in *The Progressive* and *Z Magazine*. He is the author of a number of books, including "Propaganda and the Public Mind: Conversations with Noam Chomsky", "Eqbal Ahmed: Confronting Empire", "The decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting", and "The Roy".

The interview was published in *Aztag Daily* and conducted by Khatchig Mouradian

**Aztag:** In one of your books you say "I feel a kinship towards Edward Said rooted perhaps in my own background, in which the themes of exile and dispossession were so prominent". Can you speak about this feeling?

**David Barsamian:** It has to do with a sense of loss. My mother lost 22 out of 25 members in her family. The situation was not very different on my father's side. 3 of my 4 grandparents were murdered. My parents were thrown out from our ancestral homes in Anatolia and found themselves in New York in 1921. The culture was completely different. It was very difficult. My parents couldn't speak English. They were poor. I was born in New York, so I was not traumatized directly in the way that they were. My parents were qughatsis (peasants). They were uneducated like most of our people in the rural areas. So they didn't know what had happened to them. I wanted to know and understand. How did we end up in New York? What happened to my grandparents? Why were they killed? Why were the Turks so savage to our people? But they couldn't give me any answers. They literally didn't know the answers themselves. One day they were living fairly normal lives and the next day this genocidal attack came upon them. So I had these questions while growing up as a child in NY and hearing about yergir (homeland). Yergir was some kind of magical place. When I heard the old timers talking about their villages it sounded like heaven. They had all kinds of wonderful fruits, vegetables; the water was so pure, et cetera. I knew instinctively it was exaggerated. Understandably, they wanted to keep the memory of the good things alive. Throughout those years, I felt a certain distance from reality. I was the product of 2 cultures. I am speaking Armenian at home going to Armenian Church and Armenian school, but also becoming thoroughly Americanized.

**Aztag:** In the process of adapting to a new country, how readily do you think one should replace one's own values with the host environment's culture and traditions?

**David Barsamian:** I think one's heritage, culture, and history are things to be cherished and maintained as much as possible. A diasporic community cannot be as authentic as the community that is in place in the homeland but we here are not in that situation. There is tremendous pressure in the US to adopt American culture and English. That is something almost inevitable but one can adapt oneself to one's new country but also take pride and interest in one's history. Most of Americans cannot find Armenia on the map. When I was a kid my schoolmates would call me Albanian or Bohemian they didn't know where Armenia was.

**Aztag:** The current generation, growing up in the Diaspora, know about their heritage, but they often choose to ignore it, and if it happens that they try to get involved and become active, the only thing that interests them politically is lobbying for recognition of the Armenian genocide.

**David Barsamian:** You have touched an important point. It's as if the genocide issue is the only thing in the world that is of any value. It's an obsession, and when you are obsessed with anything, you have distortion. You lack a panoramic 360 degree vision. You can only see one particular degree. This is, of course, because the issue is unresolved and the pain is lingering. Nevertheless, it is very disturbing that the only issue that seems to galvanize them is April 24th. I have grown up with this. It is a crucial issue and we should definitely keep it alive. But we have to be skillful and creative and not operate out of a feeling of victimhood. We should participate in issues that are important to other communities. You can't just be focused on your single April 24th event to the exclusion of everything else. It's a very diverse and complex world out there but you can always find common ground. The Armenian genocide is not an Armenian issue. It's a universal issue and it is a mistake in making it a sectarian identity cause.

**Aztag:** Do you think public opinion in the US has recently become more sympathetic towards the Palestinians?

**David Barsamian:** Public opinion is manipulated by the media. The media has been extremely hostile towards the Palestinians. Everything they do is always reported as violent, and everything the Israelis do is retaliation. The Israelis are constantly portrayed as acting in self defense. The negative portrayal of Palestinians extends in general to Arabs, Muslims and Islam. However, Americans in great numbers, when asked the question, say they believe that there should be an independent Palestinian state. So it is a mixed kind of opinion but the atmosphere that the media create is extremely negative. Their pro-Israel bias is embarrassingly blatant. Every time there is a suicide bombing it creates an electronic wave of sympathy for Israel. I want to tell your readers, Americans are not naturally ignorant, even though some people may think that. This ignorance is constructed. It is the product of the propaganda system and the media which makes Americans so uninformed about the rest of the world and particularly about the Middle East. But the fact that it is constructed thing is a good because it can be deconstructed. There's a lot of new information coming forward. Young people are using the Internet. They aren't depending on corporate TV, "Time Magazine", "The Washington Post" and the "New York Times" for their info. They are going to



[www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org), reading dispatches from "The Guardian" or "Le Monde Diplomatique", reading different types of media from around the world and all that is contributing to a more realistic view of what is going on.

**Aztag:** Some people would argue that Globalization is here to stay, and the anti-globalization movement can do little to change things.

**David Barsamian:** If you think that, and then the outcome will be certain. We have to resist this notion of inevitability. Again, it's the same issue, if you submit yourself, then it shows the effect of colonization and propaganda. What progressive leftists like me are saying is that we are not against Globalization, which is as old as history. It's corporate capitalist driven globalization that is the problem. We are seeking fair trade, not exploitative trade where I make an enormous amount of profit and you just make a few dinars. We seek a globalization based on a sense of equality and justice.

**Aztag:** Another export of the US is democracy. However, democracy in the United States itself does not seem to be full blown. For instance, democracy also means information and I'm not sure about the way information is handled by the US media. How independent is the media there?

**David Barsamian:** If you look, you can find independent information, but it's not easily available. It's a relatively free country, not a dictatorship. I have a weekly national radio broadcast; I give lectures all over the US. No one is interfering with me, but we don't speak to a large audience because we don't have capital, so we exist on the margins. The goal is to reach a large mainstream audience. There's a problem in the US. Democracy is in a very weak state and it's not thriving. We have 2 political parties that are largely controlled by big money Wall Street interests, corporations, and lobbies. We don't have an effective opposition like in some other countries. Look what happened in the election 2000 in the state of Florida, how can anyone talk about democracy after that?

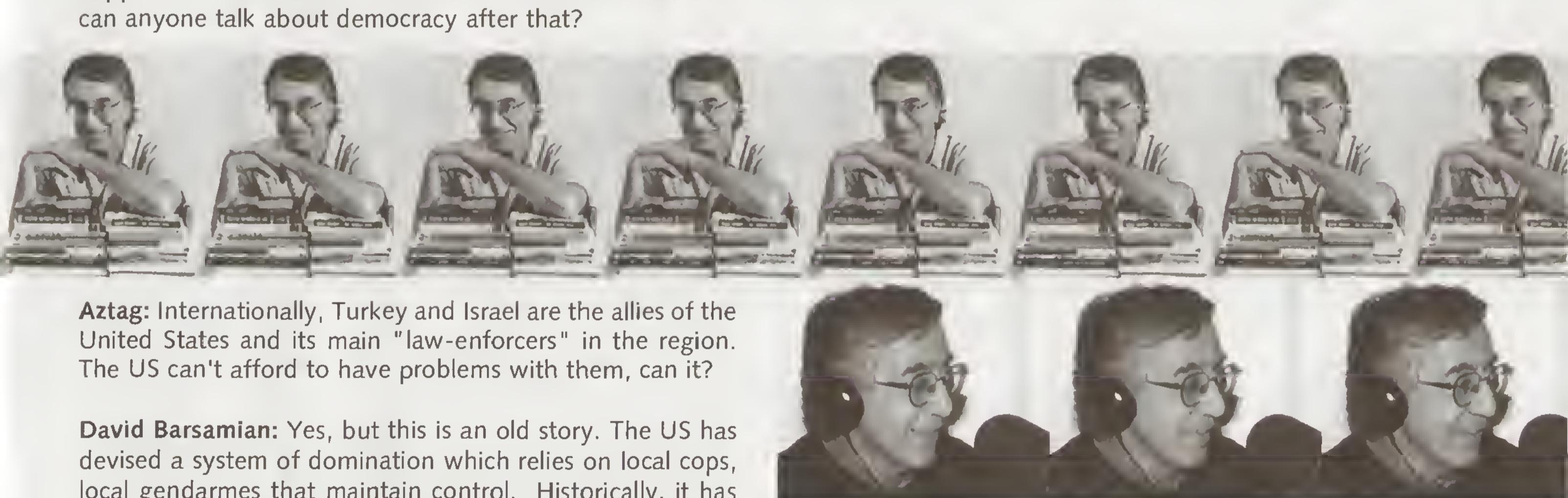
was so unpopular in the world. This has happened because of extremely militaristic policies of the Bush administration (the attack on Iraq, the continued occupation of Afghanistan, blind support for Sharon's aggressive policies). There's so much hostility and antagonism towards this country. Yes, there are terrorist threats but no one is addressing the reasons for terrorism. You remember the assassination of Turkish diplomats in 1970s and 80s? Why was that happening? There was a historical reason. It doesn't mean you support the action but one has to address the roots of the problem not its symptoms. I don't think it's a good idea to hijack planes and fly them into buildings and kill people who are basically innocent. But we have to understand the background. Why are people motivated? There are reasons. The corporate media have completely failed to explain to the American people why there is so much hostility towards this country. They either say it's envy, "Everyone wants to be like America but they can't" or the ever-popular, "They just hate us."

**Aztag:** It's a clash of civilizations, Huntington would say.

**David Barsamian:** More like a clash of fundamentalisms. Bush and Bin Laden have some things in common. They are both mujahids, holy warriors. One fights for imperialism and the other for a warped view of Islam.

**Aztag:** A last word?

**David Barsamian:** We began with Edward Said, let's end with him. He was a fervent advocate against monochromatic thinking. He embraced pluralism and open debate and rejected any kind of narrow thinking. He was inspired by the poem of Aime Cesaire of Martinique: But the work of man is only just beginning and it remains for man to conquer all the violence entrenched in the recesses of his passion. And no race possesses the monopoly of beauty, of intelligence, of force, and there is a place for all at the rendez-vous of victory.



**Aztag:** Internationally, Turkey and Israel are the allies of the United States and its main "law-enforcers" in the region. The US can't afford to have problems with them, can it?

**David Barsamian:** Yes, but this is an old story. The US has devised a system of domination which relies on local cops, local gendarmes that maintain control. Historically, it has been Iran, Turkey, and Israel, all non-Arab countries. Now of course Iran is out of the picture and the job is left to Israel and Turkey. They are the primary enforcers of US imperialism in the region. But some of the work of empire requires heavy lifting. And only Washington can do that. The US sees Turkey as a strategic ally and as a tool. So it wants to please Turkey and it will push the Turkish application forward in the EU. But right now the US is not very popular in Europe so this can actually backfire on Turkey. I cannot recall a period in the history when the US

# Sèvres & Treaty



Turquie (traité de Sèvres):

- territoires conservés dont
- territoires prévus pour un éventuel État kurde
- zones démilitarées

zone d'influence:

- britannique
- française
- italienne

mandat de la SDN

- britannique
- française

territoires attribués:

- à la Grèce
- à l'Arménie

possessions:

- britannique
- italienne

Strange life is; one day your hopes and dreams are incredibly high and you think that you have been treated as a human being, again having your own rights and freedom that were prohibited from you for decades. And then, all these dreams and hopes were thrown in a burning flame... That is exactly what happened to Armenians with the two oxymora treaties: Sèvres and Lausanne.

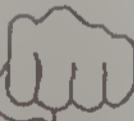
The Treaty of Sèvres was the savior of all the minorities living under the Ottoman Empire's rule; it gave to all these people a portion of what I like to call it: "THE GANZES" (entire). The idea of this Treaty was clarified during the San Remo Conference on May 11th 1920 and was presented to the Ottoman Government for approval. On July 22nd 1920, the Council of the Ottoman Empire was assembled directed by Sultan Vahiduddin. The Council decided that: "It is acceptable to destroy a weak existence" and ratified the Treaty.

However, not all the members of the parliament agreed with the Sultan's idea, one of them was Tevfik Pasha who opposed to sign a treaty that divides the Turkish Territories and destroys the Turkish nobility and he considered all other members who signed this Treaty as traitors. Nevertheless, the representatives of Turkey, Resat Halis Bey and Riza Tevfik Bey, signed the Treaty of Sèvres on the 10th of August 1920.

The main purpose of this Treaty was to give all the minorities in the Ottoman Empire their right and the opportunity for them to build a Nation having the triad of land, government and army.

The Treaty of Sèvres divided the Ottoman Empire into several regions: the North-Western territories were lined with the Istanbul city; Anatolia was given to Greece; South-Eastern provinces such as Mardin, Urfa, Gaziantep, the Amanos Mountain and the Northern side of Osmaniye were left to France. Bayazit, Erzerum, Van, Mus, Bitlis, to Erzincan would be left to independent Armenia that Turkey would have to recognize according to the Treaty. In Iraq and Syria, an independent Kurdistan was going to be created. Beside these, the territories left to the Turks would be separated in between the populations: Antalya and Konya would be Italian; Adana, Sivas and Malatya would be French, and Northern Iraq would be British. In Istanbul, the Sultan and the government would have been settled, but, Istanbul would be an international region. According to the Treaty of Sèvres, the minorities would be more privileged than the Turks, as they would not pay any tax and would not undergo military service.

The military forces of the government had delimited in to 50,700 soldiers, and tanks, cannons and planes were completely forbidden. Only volunteered soldiers were recruited. The navy was established of seven gunboats and six torpids. Submarines were prohibited as well. However, the articles about financial and economical issues were more vaulting than



# Lausanne at odds



## Turquie en 1940:

Turquie en 1920  
  territoires obtenus au traité de Kars (1921)  
  territoires récupérés en 1923 par rapport au traité de Sèvres  
  cédé par la France en 1939  
  zones démilitarisées jusqu'en 1936

## colonies et mandats européens en 1923:

britanniques  
  français  
  italiennes  
  territoire revendiqué par la Turquie et attribué à l'Irak en 1926 (arbitrage de la SDN)

the military ones. By those articles, the Ottoman Empire turned out to be an Ally colony. According to the Treaty, a Finance Commission would be established by English, French and Italian representatives and this commission would administrate the Ottoman incomes.

The Sèvres Peace Treaty imposed by the Allies on the Ottoman Empire after the First World War had virtually destroyed Turkey as a national state.

After the nationalist victory in Greece and the overthrow of the Sultan during the War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal's government was in a position to request a new agreement.

And so, in its August 19th 1920 assembly, the Turkish Parliament, established in Ankara, officially rejected the Treaty of Sèvres and declared the Ottoman Dynasty and the Ottoman Council as traitors for ratifying it.

The final treaty concluding First World War was signed by representatives of Turkey (as the successor to the Ottoman Empire) on one side, and by Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) on the other. The Treaty was signed at Lausanne, Switzerland, on July 24th 1923, after a seven-month conference.

Turkey recovered full sovereign rights over all its territory and undertook to guarantee the rights of its minorities. The Treaty of Lausanne was meant to replace the Treaty of Sèvres, which was never ratified. It is worth mentioning that the Treaty of Lausanne never mentioned the word Armenia in its entire text and is not signed by any Armenian while an Armenian delegation (presided by Avedis Aharonian) had participated in the negotiations of the Treaty of Sèvres. As far as we all are noticing here is that it has no validity to Armenian(s).

Because it is of interest for Armenia, Armenians demand the implementation of the Treaty of Sèvres and should Turkey have a government taking seriously into account the interests of Turkey, and not those of the United States nor Israel, then the Treaty of Sèvres is WHAT MUST BE.

Kurdish and Armenian occupied territories should be restored for the sake of regional stability. Then, Turkey will easily have two neighbor countries with good relations and the road to Middle Asia and Russia will be fully open before it. These are the only markets where the Turkish goods can be sold and where many Turkic-speaking nationalities live. A country is much stronger when it has good relations with its neighbors. Its force is not measured by its army.



# Living Despite the Scar is the Triumph

Scars let one remember a past pain, a past sadness and a loss, but if they can remember a triumph, a victory, then it can show that obstacles can be overcome.

The Armenian cultivator, who carried a scar on the hand, started to remember the fight, but work in the spring, with the sole worry to cultivate the land of the ancestors, with love, care and honest effort.

The Armenian entrepreneur, who lost all capital in the last war, received the motivation to work twice as much to regain what he lost and more.

The Armenian History, initiated through sacrifices, grew on limitless patriotism and was immortalized through magnificent works of arts and with the creation of Armenian letters, 1600 years ago.

The Nation offered the world, along with the paintings and plays, brilliant minds and sparkling souls.

Evil tried to eliminate Armenian from the map and the Armenians from the world.

What can one do in front of such a heartbreak and destructing evil?

Either fight or flight.

The Armenian cannot ever surrender to pain or evil goals.

The massacre of the intellectuals was the first step of the evil plan; the songs that were written by our authors became the anthem of the soldiers who tried to neutralize the pain. The journey started with suffering. Can it continue with a national gain?

The Armenian Nation started a path of suffering with families losing sole protectors, children being born as orphans and wives becoming widows the minute the shadow of death stepped in.

The souls of the fathers and intellectuals tried to protect the children and the Nation down on earth, but they couldn't put an end to the whips of the sword.

The black sword of death didn't differentiate between the white innocent lives of children neither it did save the wise elder nor the sweet women.

The death path that started with the murder of the Armenian writers, continued with children singing their immortal miracles in art that guided the Armenian soldiers through the war of sorrow and pain.

The human heart can't stand such murder; neither a mind can understand so much evil will. The judge of Armenian lives on earth was the Turkish government that found the Armenians "guilty of being Armenian".

The Armenian Nation is now living on the memory of destruction that strengthens an Armenian to become a better human, a wiser person and an ideal ARMENIAN.

The murder of one child who's playing outside his house or one old man who is giving advice to his children is GENOCIDE.

This word was introduced in the XXth Century, 90 years ago, though the Armenian Genocide, and continues to reveal its impact every day.

Death cannot be an end; it can be a beginning.

And now Armenians are present to start a beginning that involves rebellion to build the Nation, better than ever, and write in History the story of a Nation who saw the pain, then was healed and continued with the scar, to draw the paintings of victory, happiness and success for all its children.

Mary Ghazarian





First, they took the intellectuals and the community leaders, and very soon it was the entire population. The 24th of April 1915 marked the beginning of the extermination of a whole nation, when the ferocious teeth of Turkish barbarism, motivated by genocidal intentions, cracked more than 1.5 million innocent Armenians.

There were the peaceful peasants working in their fields: they irrigated their lands with their blood. There were the public figures, dedicated to the development of the empire: they were hanged in public squares. There were the writers, the pioneers of the Armenian Renaissance: they wrote their last chapters in red. There were the soldiers serving the Turkish army: they were deprived of their arms, sent to frontlines as human shields or simply murdered by groups. There were the loyal wives: refusing to hand themselves to Turkish thirst, they committed mass suicides. Those of them who were unlucky enough to stay alive found themselves in mass raping ceremonies, dancing naked between Turkish swords, getting burned alive while forced to continue dancing. And there were the children, innocent beings. They were cheerful, running around, playing, dancing and singing joyfully. But then, there was nothing to cheer for, no legs to run around, no hands to play, no friends to dance with; only a strangled voice to cry and beg for mercy... What mercy?

They thought they were dreaming; but alas, it was real. They wished they were dreaming; but alas, it was real. Driven to the altars of madness, sacrificed to please the bloodthirsty masses, they begged that this nightmare is over; but alas, it was no nightmare. Today, after 90 years, the victims hope you are not dreaming, because it was, it is and it will stay very real. The Armenian Genocide will not be subject to historical oblivion.

90 years have passed since then. 90 years of injustice and indifference towards the Armenian Cause, with some countries contenting simply by recognizing the Genocide, with no significant act or pressure on Turkey. 90 years, and the criminal is still hanging around freely in the international political scene. After 90 years, should blame the Turkish authorities for not recognizing the crime and escaping from its responsibilities towards the victims? Or should we blame the international community for not pressing to find a solution for the Cause? Or maybe both?

The Turkish State, being the litigious inheritor of the Terror Empire, better known as the Ottoman Empire, bares total responsibility for the Genocide committed against the Armenian Nation in 1915. We strongly condemn the Turkish way of handling the Genocide case, since its policies are based on heavy denial and distortion of historical facts, all strategies developed by the advanced Turkish political machine, using each and every kind of political, financial and psychological terrorizing and intimidating methods. However, proofs and reality are far solid than any attempt to tear the black pages of History or to erase its blood-written words.

The international community, as for it, must prove its willingness to insure the rights of the Armenian people. Recognitions here and there, once every few years, and no matter how important they are, stay sterile, in the process of finding a just solution to the problem, if not followed by further action to punish the criminal, and restitute to the victims their rights. Moreover, we refuse to keep our Cause the hostage of international political considerations, as to be used for pressure and threat purposes to obtain the collaboration of Turkey in achieving some national or regional gains.

As for us, the public opinion, it is really about time that we join the voices shouting "Justice" for the Armenians and "Justice" for Humanity. Humanity indeed, because the Genocide, even though committed against the Armenians, is one of the cruellest and ugliest crimes against Humanity, and a violation of all the noble values that it represents. And here gets clear the implication of each one of us in pursuing a just solution for "Our Cause," unless one does consider himself as not making part of this Humanity, or as being deprived from Human Conscience. And we might be talking here about those who spare no effort to camouflage the Truth or to accord some kind of counter-accountability immunity to Turkey, either to impose some demands, or to receive "thank you" packs or even regulate salaries. The time has come to put an end to such superficial and materialistic approaches to the Armenian Genocide.

It will be our common responsibility to demand a just solution for the Armenian Genocide.

Not resolving the injustice resulting from the Armenian Genocide opened wide the doors to other similar acts that still continue till our days. Will we let the Humanity bare more of the heavy weight of injustice? Or we will take action to stop "human v/s human" atrocities?

Finding a just solution to the Armenian Genocide will restitute the rights of the Armenian people and achieve Justice, thus, correcting the dysfunction that caused the Genocide in the history path of Humanity, destroying the wall of silence behind which are hiding other war criminals and most importantly, preventing other crimes against Humanity from occurring.

# CAMPAIGNING AGAINST GENOCIDE ON THE NET

*Due to the growing interest and accessibility to the internet and the great information that one can find, Zavarian Review invites you to explore some of these websites which were selected among lots of others and which are important to understand the meaning, the effects and the results of any genocide in general, and particularly the Armenian Genocide.*

## [www.genocidewatch.org](http://www.genocidewatch.org)

Genocide Watch is the Coordinator for the International Campaign to End Genocide.

Available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese versions, the website defines the word genocide, and includes a detailed list of all the genocides committed in the world, a very interesting study about the eight stages of a genocide and how to prevent it, as well as a document about the twelve ways to deny a genocide and many of other very reliable studies.

## [www.isg-iags.org](http://www.isg-iags.org)

The Institute for the Study of Genocide (ISG) and the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) conducts several researches and issues alerts regarding genocide.

You can have access to articles written in newsletters...

## [www.ppu.org.uk](http://www.ppu.org.uk)

The Peace Pledge Union (PPU) is an independent organization of individuals from all walks of life. This site focuses on the violence on the screen, children's rights... and includes a bibliography on some revolutionary people and some of their quotations. It's a great resource for teachers. It also has full reports on convention done on different themes.

## [www.armenocide.am](http://www.armenocide.am)

The Armenian Genocide Institute-Museum functions under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenian. This website (available in English) dedicated to the Armenian Genocide has an exhaustive and updated chronology as well as data with specific numbers of the victims, pictures, information about the Turkish Triumvirate and publications related to the issue.

## [www.cdca.asso.fr](http://www.cdca.asso.fr)

This is the website of the Armenian National Committee of France (available in French). It presents updated news about the Armenian Genocide, the countries and international organizations that have recognized it, denial as well as Armenia through interviews, documents and press releases.

## [www.armeniangenocide90.com](http://www.armeniangenocide90.com)

The Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee regroups the Lebanese-Armenian political parties, organizations and religious denominations.

Its main task is to raise awareness about the centrality of the 90th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. The Committee foresees a series of events which will take place starting March 2005 and throughout the year. These events include a wide range of activities and encompass political, cultural, educational and communication fields. News and special announcements will be updated online.

## [www.theforgotten.org](http://www.theforgotten.org)

The website is available in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Turkish, and Russian.

In the website, you can find the chronology of the Armenian Genocide from 1894 till 1939, a documentary on the Armenian genocide presented by Peter Jennings on ABC, in 1999, lots of images of the deportation mostly taken on the road of Deir Zor and finally audiovisual survivor testimonies.

## [www.teachgenocide.org](http://www.teachgenocide.org)

This website is made by a nonprofit organization (the Genocide Education Project) which assists teachers to teach about genocide, particularly the Armenian Genocide by developing and distributing instructional materials, organizing educational workshops...

In this website, you may find lesson plans, survivor accounts, newspaper articles, documents, maps, videos, free books and many educational tools...

## [www.imprescriptible.fr](http://www.imprescriptible.fr)

This site (available only in French) is implemented by Armenian and other net surfers in order to counter websites which are based on denial. It includes the chronology of the Genocide, documents, articles, lectures, a study on the deniers' strategy, as well as charts of the deportations, each accompanied with a rich appendix.

*Finally, no matter how much anyone tries to describe a website, it would never be complete without exploring it personally because in every corner of a website, each click leads you to a whole new world of information...*



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# نافاريان ريفيو

العدد ٣٠ - رقم ١ - ٢٠٠٥ - نسخة مجانية



٩٠ عاماً

## الإبادة الأرمنية



APRIL 2005

# 90 YEARS OF DENIAL

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AZTAG  
DAILY NEWSPAPER (BEIRUT)  
AND THE ARMENIAN WEEKLY (BOSTON)

THIS SPECIAL PUBLICATION IS SPONSORED BY

BANKERS  
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NANCI KARAOGLIAN GROUP

DEATH HAS AN UGLY FACE

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL



1,500,000 Armenians lost their lives in the first Genocide of the 20th Century.

## RECOGNIZE THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

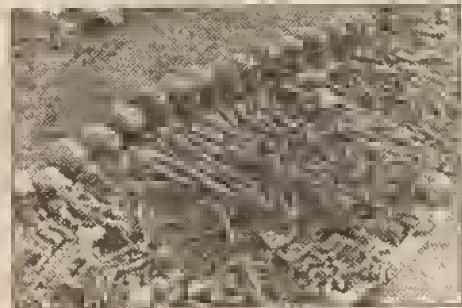
### Table of Contents

#### 4 EDITORIAL

#### 5 SEMANTICS OF GENOCIDE

- Beyond Genocide: The Semantics of Deception and Elimination  
*Tatul Sonents-Papazian*

- Dead Reckoning: Why Is it that Only One of the Great Holocausts of the Last Century Merits a Capital 'H'?  
*Robert Fisk*



#### 8 INTERNATIONAL LAW

- The Armenian Genocide Revisited: New Perspectives in International Law  
*Richard Giragosian*

- U.S. Official Records on the Armenian Genocide  
*Ara Sarafian*

- The 20th Century's First Genocide: International Law, Impunity, the Right to Reparations and the Ethnic Cleansing Against the Armenians, 1915-1916  
*Alfred de Zayas*

- Europe, Turkey and the Armenian Genocide  
*Tessa Hofmann*

#### 20 COMPANIONS IN SUFFERING

- The Cambodian Genocide and Imperial Culture  
*Ben Kiernan*

- Denying Genocide from Armenia to Bosnia  
*Helen Fein*

- Dehumanization in Genocide

*Henry Theriault*



# Table of Contents

## 27 TURKISH-ARMENIAN RELATIONS

- From Enemies to Rivals? *Khatchik Oer Ghoukassian*
- Our Past Informs Our Present *Antranig Kasbarian*
- Recognition or Reconciliation? Turkish-Armenian Relations Need Untangling *Hratch Tchilingirian*
- Border Politics: The Geopolitical Implications of Opening the Turkish-Armenian Border *Asbed Kotchikian*

## 35 Recognition and Reconciliation

- On the Foundations of Turkey: An Interview with Muge Gocek *Khatchig Mouradian*

- Historiography of the Armenian Genocide: Developments, Impediments and Suggestions for the Future *Bedross Oer Matossian*

- Confessions of an Angry Armenian *George Aghjayan*

## 42 RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER GENOCIDE RECOGNITION

- What Happens After Recognition of the Armenian Genocide? *Stephen Feinstein*

- A New Challenge for Armenians: Incorporating the History of the Armenian Genocide into America's Schools *Sara Cohan*

## 44 SURVIVOR STORIES

- Remembering my Grandfather *Sara Cohan*

- Our Grandmother's Heritage to Us All *Harry Koundakjian*

## 47 MEMORY AND GENOCIDE TRAUMA

- Memory: The Soul of History *Thea Halo*

- The Genocide and Continuing Psychological Trauma 90 Years Later *Meline Karakashian*

## 50 ARTS AND LITERATURE

- Historical Memory: Threading the Contemporary Literature of Armenia *Rubina Peroomian*

- Orhan Pamuk Gomes Back *Khatchig Mouradian*

- Selected Poems

## 56 BOOK REVIEWS

- Genocide Survivor Biographies *Rhoda Kachuc*

- Ninety Years Later: New Perspectives on the Genocide *Roger Smith*

## 59 TAKING UP THE CLAIM

- Responses to a Turkish Axiom

## 60 INTERNATIONAL DECLARATIONS

The opinions expressed in this special publication, other than in the "Editorial" column, do not necessarily reflect the views of The Armenian Weekly and The Aztag Daily Newspaper.

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## Editorial

## Preparing the Way

On April 25, 1948, months before the United Nations (U.N.) formally adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, an editorial titled "Tseghasbanutyun" (Genocide) appeared in the Lebanese-Armenian newspaper *Aztag*. Referring to the calamity of World War II, during which the word "genocide" had been coined, the editor asked: "Was it necessary for yet another earth-shattering catastrophe to occur for people to learn the word 'genocide'?"

In the January 1, 1959 issue of *The Armenian Weekly* in Boston, a front-page article by Raphael Lemkin—the scholar who coined the term "genocide" and who was the driving force behind the adoption of the aforementioned U.N. Convention—gave a partial answer to this question: "The victims of genocide throughout the ages have filled history with their sufferings to such an extent that mankind can no longer escape the recognition of either the consequence or the moral responsibility. The result has been an ever-stronger articulation of human conscience, culminating, finally, in the enactment of an international law against this foul crime. The sufferings of the Armenian men, women and children thrown into the Euphrates River or massacred on the way to Der Zor have prepared the way for the adoption of the Genocide Convention by the United Nations."

Today, however, decades after these words were written, countless other human-wrought catastrophes, such as ethnic cleansing and mass murder, continue to plague the world. As Armenians commemorate the 90th anniversary of the horrors that "prepared the way" for the adoption of the Genocide Convention, the same question continues to haunt humanity: what have we learned?

As the contributors to this special issue will strive to show, the international community has yet to condemn all crimes against humanity independent of their political expediency, to bring perpetrators to justice, and to enforce just solutions to the plight of dispossessed peoples. It has often been stated that the suffering of a nation does not affect that nation alone; it is the scourge of humanity. When those who suffer demand recognition and restitution, they ask the international community to embody justice and thus redeem itself. The descendants of peoples decimated by genocide do not need resolutions from parliaments or declarations from world leaders recognizing their tragedy to keep alive the memory of the victims of these crimes.

It is humanity that needs resolutions and recognition concerning genocide to cleanse itself from the shame of indifference and, alas, the widespread sin of denial.

This recognition would apply also to the victims of genocide. Now that Armenians around the world prepare to lay wreaths on genocide memorials and monuments, they should not forget their own responsibilities towards others. As members of the global community, they should remember and acknowledge the genocides of other nations and the suffering of all peoples. Joint efforts by descendants of victims of various calamities will perhaps make the world a safer place for all.

## Book Reviews

also an insightful study by Donald Ritchie of how Congress dealt with the Armenian massacres and genocide. "In the many hearings and debates that Congress held on the Armenian Question between the 1890s and 1920s, the legislative branch amply demonstrated its awareness of the Armenian Massacres, and yet other than opening some avenues of immigration it did little to ameliorate the Armenian's plight... Offered an opportunity to engage in an early form of 'nation building,' the United States declined a mandate over Armenia, a decision for which Congress bore the ultimate responsibility."

Two other essays that are richly rewarding can also be discussed. Thomas Leonard's study of the America media's reporting on the Genocide indicates that it was largely accurate and made accessible to papers all across the country; further, it helped to mobilize a large public to demand action to stop the killing. In the end, the funds that were raised for the Armenians did save many lives. On the other hand, there was little effect on American policy: no declaration of war against Turkey, no mandate after the war.

Jay Winter draws from this a cautionary tale: those who argue that protection of human rights is aided by "modern communications should take pause... The paralysis of policy was not a function of ignorance, but of a willful turning away from a fully documented catastrophe."

Suzanne Moranian's essay on American missionary relief efforts is detailed and shows a chillingly modern transformation of the missionary ethic to an increasingly bureaucratic, businesslike approach to raising funds for humanitarian relief. Hundreds of millions of dollars were raised through efforts initiated by American missionaries; she believes that without these efforts, the Armenians would have disappeared as a people. The relief organizers "incorporated state-of-the-art organizational skills with the ancient zealousness of the Gospel. That is what made them so potent." They knew how to work the crowds: "They appealed to America's national pride and historic sense of mission globally. They highlighted the nation's special responsibility to the Armenians as well as America's interests in the Middle East. They played on the emotion of guilt and asked, 'How can you eat when others are starving?' The appeals also expressed the religious and secular values of charity, altruism and brotherhood. They reminded the public of the responsibility to help the unfortunate. The promotions also embodied the Social Gospel message that one attains salvation by saving others." The good news is that faith, cold calculation and hucksterism works.

Balakian's beautifully written and carefully crafted book *The Burning Tigris* addresses all of the themes touched on by those who approach the Armenian genocide in terms of America's response to it. But he does so with greater depth in most instances and includes material on the massacres in 1894-1896 that the other accounts omit.

There are several interrelated themes and narratives in Balakian's book. First, there are the detailed, heart-wrenching accounts of the Turkish massacres of some 200,000 Armenians in the 1890s, and of the Genocide, beginning in 1915, that claimed the lives of at least a million Armenians. At the same time, the author describes the dedication and courage of American diplomats, who tried, with little support from the State Department, to end the carnage.

But there is also the story of a broadly based American humanitarian movement that sought to provide aid to the Armenians in their despite condition, and that demanded that the U.S. government protect them from further violence. Balakian, however, shows that by the beginning of the 1920s, there was a growing conflict between public opinion, which strongly supported an independent Armenia, and a Congress and White House that had other interests.

In his final chapter, he documents Turkey's continuing denial of the Armenian genocide and its efforts, largely successful, to enlist the White House and the State Department in defeating Congressional resolutions that would publicly recognize the Genocide. Balakian, in effect, shows both the impact of public opinion and its limitations.

What puzzles me about all of the books that stress the Armenian relief efforts is that a central question is never raised: why, if the Armenians are being subjected to genocide, do the Young Turks allow any distribution of aid to them? When we are told that thousands of Armenians owe their lives to American relief efforts, why did the regime allow this to happen? We need careful reflection about this question and its possible implications. Turkey could argue (speciously): "You see, this just proves that we did all we could to protect the Armenians, even if they were rebels and traitors." My own guess is that allowing what became Near East Relief to operate in Turkey stemmed from three considerations: providing cover for what was actually going on; providing the basis for more lenient treatment in case Turkey lost the war; and keeping the United States out of the war against Turkey.

This latter point should not be taken lightly: it was the missionaries who urged President Wilson not to declare war on Turkey; it was the missionaries who initiated the request for massive aid, which they would distribute. But we could also draw a different conclusion: any Armenian was subject to death in the period, but there was no intent to kill all Armenians. Hence, for the reasons given earlier, some could be allowed to receive aid and possibly survive.

The two other works to be reviewed move away from the American centered approach; they also illuminate the Genocide through perspectives that have not yet been discussed. Let me begin with the powerful book by the Turkish historian Taner Akcam. The central argument in *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (Zed Books, 2004) is that there are deep continuities between the Young Turk regime and the Republic that came into existence in 1923.

One of the main elements of this is the forging of Turkish identity from the trauma arising out of "military defeats, territorial losses, national humiliation at the hands of foreign powers," and fear for the very existence of Turkey in a world perceived to be full of foreign and domestic enemies. Both regimes required a strong nationalism and both saw diversity as a threat to national existence.

The way the Young Turks dealt with the society was through massacre and ethnic cleansing of "alien" elements; the Republic, on the other hand, imposed a set of taboos that denied the existence of different classes, ethnic groups and cultural differences.

There were also other continuities. The organizers of the Turkish independence movement after World War I were persons who had participated in the Genocide; once the Republic came into existence, many of these were given important posts in the new government.

Finally, it is, according to Akcam, the connection between the Genocide and the Republic that lies at the heart of Turkey's denial and suppression of discussion of the Genocide. "The devastation that would ensue if Turks had now to stigmatize as 'murderers and thieves' those whom they are used to regarding as 'great saviors' and 'people who created a nation out of nothing,' is palpable. It seems so much simpler to deny the Genocide completely than to seize the initiative and face the obliteration of ingrained notions about the Republic and Turkish national identity."

The final work under review, *The Banality of Denial: Israel and the Armenian Genocide* (Transaction Publishers, 2003), is a pioneering study of how a people that has itself been subjected to genocide deals with the genocide of another people. The question, in effect, that Yair Auron asks is: "Who is my neighbor?" His answer is that my neighbor is anyone who has been victimized by genocide: I must acknowledge the historical reality of the crime and teach others about its reality. In so doing, I engage in a "solidarity of suffering." But while every people should stand up for truth, even at the costs of its interests, Auron argues that there is an additional obligation to do so when one's own group has suffered a similar fate. Hence, he examines in great detail how Israel has dealt with the Armenian genocide.

The pattern that he traces is one of initial avoidance, then passive denial, and since the 1990s, an active denial by political officials, bureaucrats in the education-

al system, those presiding over the non-print media, and a growing number of academics who sound, for all the world, like Heath Lowry and the Turkish government.

On the other hand, he commends the print media for attempting to raise awareness about the Armenian genocide; puts special emphasis on the principled stand of Yossi Sarid, who, as Education Minister, publicly acknowledged the Genocide in 2000, only to be disavowed by the government; and pointed to the efforts of a handful of Israeli scholars to combat denial of the Genocide.

Let me give only two quotations about the role of the state of Israel in denial of the Armenian genocide. The first is an example of passive denial, but just barely. A senior official at the Foreign Ministry in 2002 said: "Every time the Armenian issue is discussed, we have to think twice about what name to give it."

The Turks complain against anyone who mentions 'Armenian genocide,' so our stand is that we 'recognize the sufferings of the Armenians,' and try to evade the historical circumstances and the guilty party." Meanwhile, the Israeli government used its influence in the United States to defeat the 2000 Congressional Resolution that would have officially recognized the Armenian genocide.

But the following year, active denial became explicit with the statement by Israel's foreign minister, Shimon Peres: "We reject attempts to create a similarity between the Holocaust and the Armenian allegations. Nothing similar to the Holocaust occurred. It is a tragedy what the Armenians went through, but not a genocide."

Auron suggests that Israelis in general know little about the Armenian genocide, but to the extent they do, tend to be indifferent. However, the state and its cultural extensions, such as the educational establishment, have moved toward active denial. He attributes this to political expediency and to pressure from within Israel not to "dilute" the moral force of the Holocaust by recognizing other genocides.

The argument about expediency speaks for itself (politics is about interests and not truth), but one wishes that Auron had examined the claim that recognizing the Armenian genocide or any other genocide would somehow diminish the moral significance of the Holocaust. Is there any empirical evidence that this could result? On the other hand, might not such a recognition have a liberating effect, achieving Auron's vision of victims standing with victims?

Let me conclude with some critical comments that I hope will encourage the author to reconsider some parts of his argument. Genocide is a crime against humankind, thus all persons have an obligation to respond to genocide, not just peoples who have been subjected to it.

Jews, Armenians, Cambodians and Tutsis have no greater obligation than other peoples to recognize the sufferings of other victims. Also, I wish that Auron had dealt more with why denial matters.

He tends to treat it as a moral issue only, but it has far reaching consequences that extend in many directions. Finally, his assumption (or is it a moral demand?) that groups that have been victimized will have greater empathy for victims is problematic: trauma may just as easily lead to a fortress mentality in which the focus is on the self and one's own group.

Victimization, in other words, may not lead to a solidarity of suffering, but rather to a diminution of human concern.

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## Taking Up The Claim

## Sahibi çıkmayan hak, hak değil dir...

Recently, Armenian youth were asked to reflect on the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Prompted by the Turkish saying, 'A claim without an owner is not a valid claim,' the youth responded with their thoughts on recognition and reparations for the Genocide.

## The Footprints of Victory

By Hovig Hovigian

For so long, inhumanity has marked human history. Power and injustice have been crucial in deciding the faith of nations, as well as of individuals.

Every time a state has found itself in a prevailing position it has always tried to spread this dominance over the weaker states.

Sometimes this strategy has lead to tragic events as in the case of the Armenian genocide.

The ancient Turkish dream of a great Turkish state from Istanbul to Mongolia looked ever-possible by the opportunity presented with the eruption of the World War I.

Armenia stood as the sole barrier against this objective.

So the criminal Turkish government's verdict was simple and cruel: exterminate the

Armenian.

The Genocide planned, organized and carried by the Ottoman Empire failed in its mission, but unfortunately resulted in 1.5 million martyrs and almost as many deportees.

Today, after 90 years, denial remains the key response of the Turkish state to the international community regarding the Armenian genocide committed by their ancestors.

But it has started to sense the walls of silence crumbling around it. The unyielding and unbending will of the Armenian struggle is getting closer and closer towards achieving the first of its goals: getting Turkey to accept its responsibility of the Armenian genocide.

After that, it will have to answer to all the other questions regarding compensation, moral and tangible, and most important of all about all the historically Armenian territories it has

2005 is dedicated to commemorating the Genocide, which is an undeniable fact in Armenian and world history. This gives the new generation a golden opportunity to re-evaluate the past and look toward a future of genocide recognition.

However, this cannot happen if the Armenian youth sits idle and waits for Turkey to admit to its crimes.

It is every Armenian's obligation and sacred responsibility to demand justice for the violation of human rights. This is why Catholicos Aram I has proclaimed the year 2005 as "the year of national demand for justice."

There is a Turkish saying, "A claim without an owner is not a valid claim." If Armenians worldwide do not demand justice and constantly pursue their cause, then the perpetrators will always remain unpunished.

If Armenians do not demand that Turkey recognize the Genocide and admit to their crimes, why should Armenians expect other nations to do it for them?

Just as the persistent widow in the gospel of Luke never tired in her effort to have her case heard, so should the new generation of Armenians never stop demanding justice. If Armenians stop pressuring the world, then it will only help Turkey in staging its lies as truth.

After 90 years, revitalizing our vow to get worldwide recognition of the Genocide is the least that can be done for the repose of the souls of all the victims of 1915.

Ari Dikran Nalbandian

## Making the Claim

By Sona Panos

Claim 1. n. (a) demand. (b) statement/assertion. 2. v. (a) to demand as one's right. (b) to state/to assert (without any proof). (c) to say you own something which has been lost.

Excerpt from Webster's English Dictionary: Revised Edition

On reading the statement, we cannot grasp who the subject of the statement is. Who is making the claim? Are Armenians making a claim for genocide? Or are the Turks making a claim that genocide was never perpetrated against Armenians? Herein lies the major problem with the statement.

We must look at this statement from both the Armenian and Turkish angle to truly deduce meaning within the statement.

Armenians claim that genocide has been perpetrated against them. They are demanding, and asserting that it happened. They are using "claim" as a noun. They are demanding, as one's right, to finally have the truth of the Genocide revealed. Verb usage. But here is where the statement's use of "claim" becomes

## Valid

"A claim without an owner is not a valid claim."

A dog without an owner is not a valid dog.

A god without a son is not a valid god.

A liar without America is not a valid liar.

A turkey without a valid gobble-gobble is not a turkey.

A puppet without a protruding nose is not a Pinocchio.

A map without bloody borders is not a valid map.

Thus,

A country without its mountain is not a valid country.

Shahé Mankarian, 2005

Each person with a drop of Armenian blood in them has and owns a part of our claim. We as Armenians have the right to claim what is rightfully ours. The atrocities have gone 90 years without reparation, recognition, or restoration of lost lands. The Turks tried to eliminate our race. The Turkish quote saying "A claim without an owner is not a valid claim," shows how indifferent their attitudes were towards the planned genocide of the Armenians.

The Genocide is a historical fact, not simply a claim. It has been documented by numerous ambassadors and, unfortunately, even referenced by Hitler when speaking about the Holocaust. There is substantial evidence that the events of 1915 aren't simply a claim. They are facts. If you commit a crime, you are punished. In this case, it is time for the Turkish government to own up to its tainted past and to take responsibility for murdering 1.5 million Armenians, while forcing those who survived to leave their homeland.

Anto Megerdichian

cloudy. Where the second verb use of "claim" is written, "to state/to assert (without any proof)," Armenians are making a claim demanding to have genocide recognized, however, they have proof that the Genocide occurred.

If we look to the Turk, as the subject in the statement, we will understand that they have used "claim" as a verb. The Turkish government asserts that the genocide did not occur; yet they show nothing to prove otherwise. They are stating without any proof. Please, reveal historical documents that will show the Genocide was actually war, and produce pictures of Turkish heads lined up on a wall, Turkish people strewn, gutted, along the street, Turks ripped out of their own house, beaten and raped. No proof. As claimants within this statement, the Turkish government is undermining the Armenian cause. Because the Turkish government is not taking ownership of the genocide, Armenians can never claim it occurred.

Through this short dissection, I found that both Armenians and Turks have a claim to make. Armenians, however, have a valid claim against the Turkish government, because there is proof that genocide occurred. The historical documents, the oral history passed down through generations validate Armenians claim of genocide. The Turkish government however, has a power over the Armenian claim. They will never, without prodding, give in to Armenian claims. And they have no reason to.

The utter denial, and the condescending and patronizing tone that this statement implies, leaves a person feeling disgust and a deep sadness for our ancestors, our martyrs. But we cannot allow our disgust turn to hate and anger. However, we must do something. Armenians need to realize that they will never get anywhere talking to a giant with folded arms, or to a brick wall. We don't have enough rocks to sling, or hammers to swing. But we have the truth, each other, and we can use the knowledge of history to move onward, and to undermine the denial that has plagued us for the last 90 years.

## Taking Up The Claim

# ... A claim without an owner is not a valid claim—*Turkish axiom*

The Turkish saying, "a claim without an owner is not a valid claim" implies that we as Armenians do not have rights to Western Armenia. We built our homes, schools and churches on that land; we raised our families on that land. By denying Armenians the right to claim the area, the Turks are only belittling our history and our presence there. Turkey is trying to erase the history of the land by not educating the citizens of today.

One way to combat this annihilation from history is to continue to educate ourselves on Western Armenia and our history. We should talk about the regions where our grandparents once lived and take pride in where we are from. In addition, we must start discussing our options and future plans. We should be prepared to defend our history and know what our next steps are.

Lauren DaSilva

This quote implies that a claim will not be asserted if there is no one to pursue its assertion. Ideally, all just claims should be affirmed without anyone having to struggle. Unfortunately, we do not live in such a world. For 90 years now the perpetrators of the Genocide have remained unpunished. The Armenian people lay claim to the lands that were illegally inherited by the Republic of Turkey after World War I and to the reparations entitled to all descendants of the Genocide.

As the Armenian nation prepares to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Genocide, it becomes apparent that our claim indeed has an owner and has had one for decades. Therefore according to the Turkish saying "A claim without an owner is not a valid claim," the Armenian people have a legitimate claim on their hands. However, the Turkish government does not feel inclined to uphold that claim; in fact, they work hard at discrediting it, avoiding its consequences and sabotaging its rightful resolution.

All these attempts will fail in the end since our claims are just and we have pursued them persistently for years. The Genocide is staring Turkey in the face and it's letting the Turkish government know that the owners will always be there to claim what is rightfully theirs.

Razmig Haroun

One can postulate the merits of this apparent axiom. A claim bereft of ownership presents countless logical and rationale problems associated with justifying the merits of that particular claim. However, in the context of the Armenian genocide, we are the owners of this claim. As descendants of genocide victims and survivors, we cultivate an unrelenting duty to fight for these lands. I am an Armenian and a member of a powerful movement that strives to achieve certain goals. We owe the Armenian nation our most sedulous efforts to achieve reparations and recognition. We cannot waver in this endeavor.

Antranig Kzirian

## Prayer of Pope John Paul II Memorial of Dzidzernagapert Yerevan, 26 September 2001

The Holy Father:

O Judge of the living and the dead, have mercy on us!

Listen, O Lord, to the lament that rises from this place, to the call of the dead from the depths of the Metz Yeghern, the cry of innocent blood that pleads like the blood of Abel, like Rachel weeping for her children because they are no more.

Listen, Lord, to the voice of the Bishop of Rome, echoing the plea of his Predecessor Pope Benedict XV, when in 1915 he raised his voice in defense of "the sorely afflicted Armenian people brought to the brink of annihilation."

Look upon the people of this land who put their trust in you so long ago, who have passed through the great tribulation and never failed in their faithfulness to you:

Wipe away every tear from their eyes and grant that their agony in the twentieth century will yield a harvest of life that endures for ever. We are appalled by the terrible violence done to the Armenian people, and dismayed that the world still knows such inhumanity.

But renewing our hope in your promise, we implore, O Lord, rest for the dead in the peace which knows no end, and the healing of still open wounds through the power of your love. Our soul is longing for you, Lord, more than the watchman for daybreak, as we wait for the fullness of redemption won on the Cross, for the light of Easter which is the dawn of invincible life, for the glory of the new Jerusalem where death shall be no more.

O Judge of the living and the dead, have mercy on us all!

# International Declarations

## LEBANESE PARLIAMENT

*Resolution*

*May 11, 2000*

*"On the occasion of the 85th anniversary of massacres perpetrated by the Ottoman authorities in the year 1915, as a result of which 1.5 million Armenians fell victim, the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies recognizes the genocide perpetrated against the Armenian people and expresses its complete solidarity with demands of its Armenian citizens. Furthermore, it believes that the international recognition of this genocide is a necessary condition for the prevention of similar crimes that may occur in the future."*

From all the historic documents which confirm the protection of the Arab Moslem of the Christians and especially the Armenians, is the letter issued by Sherif of Mecca, King Husain son of Ali, in the year 1336 Hijri (A.D. 1917), in which he advises the two princes Faisal and Abdul-Aziz Al-Jarba to protect the people of the Armenian communities and to facilitate their going or their staying, regarding them as the protected people (Ahl al dhimmah) by the Moslems.

*From al-Husayn the son of 'Ali, the king of the Arab countries and the Sherif of Mecca and its Emir, to the Honorable and Glorious priuces (unara') Prince Faisal, and Prince Abdul-Aziz Al-Jarba Greetings and the mercy of God and his blessings.*

*These letters are issued to you from Umm-al Qura (Mecca) on 18 Rajab 1336 by the praise of God (who is the only God). We furthermore ask the blessings and peace to His Prophet and His family and His companions, and we inform you that we (while we thank God, blessed and praised be He) are in good health and welfare and in good grace from His kindness, ask that God bless us and you with His abundant grace.*

*What is requested from you in this letter is to protect everyone who may be staying or living in your quarters or neighborhood or among your tribes of the Armenian Jacobite community and that you should help them in all their affairs and protect them as you protect yourselves and protect your properties and your children and facilitate all what they need while they move from one locality to another or while they stay at one place.*

*They are the Dhimma of the Moslems (under the protection of the Moslems) and of them the Prophet (in God grant Him His blessings and peace) has said: "Whosoever takes from them even a rope (which ties the knee of a camel) I shall be his opponent on the day of judgement." This is the most important thing we require from you to do, and expect from your good characters and qualities to fulfill.*

*May God guard us and you by His help and blessings, and peace be to you with the mercy of God and His blessings.*

SEAL

## AUSTRALIA

*New South Wales Parliament*

*April 17, 1997*

*Whereas 24 April 1997 marks the occasion of the 82nd anniversary of the commemoration of the Genocide of the Armenians by the then Ottoman Turkish Government between 1915-1922; this House:*

1. *join the members of the New South Wales Armenian Community in honoring the memory of the 1.5 million men, women and children who fell victim of the first genocide of the 20th century;*
2. *condemn the Genocide of the Armenians and all other acts of genocide committed during our century as the ultimate act of racial, religious and cultural intolerance;*
3. *recognize the importance of remembering and learning from such dark chapters in human history to ensure that such crimes against humanity are not allowed to repeat;*
4. *condemn and prevent all attempts to use the passage of time to deny or distort the historical truth of the Genocide of the Armenians and other acts of genocide committed during this century;*
5. *designate 24 April in every year hereafter throughout New South Wales as a day of remembrance of the 1.5 million Armenians who fell victim to the first genocide of this century;*
6. *call on the Commonwealth Government officially to condemn the Genocide of the Armenians and any attempts to deny such crimes against humanity.*

## ARGENTINA

*The Senate of the Nation*

*Resolution 1554/92*

*May 5, 1993*

*Declares: Its complete solidarity with the Armenian community, which was the victim of the first genocide of the 20th century, in commemorating once again the anniversary of a crime against humanity that was to culminate with the death of 1,500,000 Armenians at the hands of the Turkish government between the years 1915 and 1917.*

*Likewise, it manifests its deep concern for the constant violations of human rights that have taken place in the autonomous region of Nagorno Karabagh against the majority Armenian population.*

## REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

*The House of Representatives*

*April 29, 1982*

*On the occasion of the Anniversary of the Genocide of the Armenian people which was started in 1915 in an organized manner by the then Turkish regime,*

*1. Notes with abhorrence and condemns unreservedly the crime against the Armenian people which had the dimensions of genocide and which uprooted the Armenians from ancestral lands.*

*2. Supports the full restoration of the inalienable rights of the Armenian people.*

*3. Underlines the harmonious and long-standing coexistence and brotherly cooperation with the Armenians of Cyprus and their contribution to the political, economic and cultural life of our country.*

*4. Considers this coexistence as evidence of the real possibility for harmonious coexistence of all the people of Cyprus regardless of language, religion or national origin.*

*5. In parallel considers it necessary to condemn the crime committed against the people of Cyprus by the Turkish invasion of 1974.*